



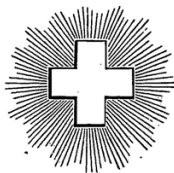
History of

Holy Rosary Church

Toledo, Ohio

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Humbly dedicated to our Most beloved Bishop

KARL J. ALTER
Bishop of Toledo

REV. PAUL P. PALKA

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF THE MOST HOLY ROSARY, TOLEDO, OHIO

On June 30, 1901, the Rt. Rev. Ignatius Horstmann, Bishop of Cleveland, appointed the Rev. Leo L. Broens to organize St. Ignatius Parish in East Toledo. The new parish was to include Birmingham and Ironville, and was to be bounded by the limits of the Sacred Heart, Good Shepherd, and St. Louis parishes in Toledo, and those of St. Ignatius in Molineetown.

Two lots (c. 200' x 348.85') situated on York, Wheeling, and Caledonia streets, were bought for the new church site from the Collins' estate at \$1,200.00 each.

The first councilmen were Messrs. Nelson Geoffrion, Alex Mauter, Thomas Garrigan, and Cosmas D. Kuntz. The latter two resigned under the pastorate of Rev. Leo L. Broens.

A combination church and school building, (64' x 104') with a 14½' sanctuary annex, and a pastoral residence, all of Sandusky blue-stone, were built by the Rev. Leo L. Broens, during the years 1901 and 1902. The dedication ceremony was performed by the Rt. Rev. Ignatius F. Horstmann on July 3, 1902.

Toward the end of August, 1903, the Rev. Leo L. Broens resigned his charge, and after a visit to Holland, his native country, returned to the United States.

From the time of Father Broen's departure until October 1, 1903, when the Rev. Frederick A. Houck was appointed his successor, the parish was attended by the Jesuit Fathers of St. John's College, Toledo, Ohio.

Upon his arrival at St. Ignatius, the new pastor found the parish in a deplorable financial state, and the people quite disheartened. The church debt amounted to \$46,000.00. The congregation, which at that time scarcely numbered seventy-five contributing families, consisted almost exclusively of renters and wage earners. For a year or two, the newly appointed pastor had great difficulty in pacifying some fifty or more creditors. Several of them actually placed claims in the hands of attorneys, but in each case a settlement was reached out of court.

In order to save the parish from bankruptcy, it was necessary to resort at once to a subscription campaign and to various church fairs. It soon became apparent, however, that it would be impossible to save the church property without making an appeal to the charity of non-parishioners. Consequently, the Rt.



Most Rev. Karl J. Alter, D.D.
Bishop of Toledo

Rev. Bishop Horstmann wrote the following letter, and requested the pastor to send a copy of it to all the priests of the diocese:

To the Reverend Pastors in the Diocese of Cleveland:

The financial affairs of St. Ignatius' Church, Toledo, Ohio, are in a very deplorable condition and the small congregation cannot possibly do more than meet the ordinary expenses of the parish.

In justice to the present pastor, the Rev. F. A. Houck, it must be said that this condition existed prior to his appointment. We sent Father Houck to St. Ignatius' Church knowing that we were imposing a heavy burden upon him; but it proves to be even greater than was supposed, and too much for him and his people to carry.

We therefore urgently request you to help him in his emergency. Kindly permit him to preach in your church and to take up a collection for his needy parish, announcing his coming and its object the Sunday before.

We hope no one will refuse him the permission we ask; and the favor will be appreciated by us.

Very truly yours in Christ,

Ignatius F. Horstmann

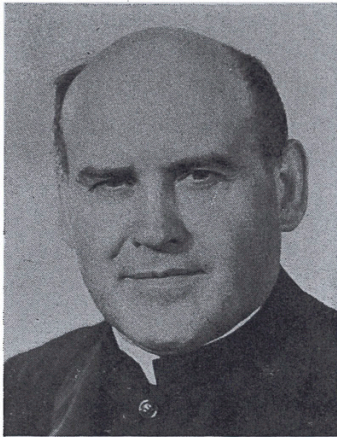
During a period of four years, from May 1, 1905, to October 1, 1909, about fifty collections for the benefit of St. Ignatius Church were taken up in an equal number of churches in the Cleveland diocese. The amount realized in this manner was \$4,149.06.

By means of bazaars and entertainments, at which all manner of catch-penny devices were resorted to, as well as by lectures given by the Reverend Pastor for the benefit of the parish, the church property was saved from going under the sheriff's hammer.

During the first seven years of his pastorate, Father Houck made personal contributions amounting to more than \$3,000.00. Annually, for the first eight years, he paid off \$1,000.00 on the principal.

Thus, as the result of his untiring effort, the financial status of the parish steadily improved.

Upon the arrival of Father Houck, St. Ignatius parochial school, which he considered the hope of the future parish, was



† **Rev. Anthony A. Pirnat**

attended by about one hundred and twenty-five children representing several nationalities. The school had originally been placed in charge of the Ursuline Sisters by the Rev. Leo L. Broens, but in September, 1904, they were succeeded by three Sisters of Notre Dame who took up their residence with the Sisters of the same order teaching at St. Stephen parish. In 1904, a fourth teacher was added to the staff in order to take care of the eight classes accommodated in four school rooms.

Owing to the proximity of the Wheeling and Lake Erie and the Terminal Belt Railways, the site originally intended for the future church was deemed very unsuitable. Accordingly, in 1906, despite these objections and the financial condition of the parish, the Reverend Pastor bought an adjoining portion of land (54' x 348.85') at a cost of \$600.00. The parish property now comprises an entire square between York and Wheeling, Caledonia and Massillon Streets, measuring 254 x 348.85 feet, or about two acres.

On February 24, 1910, Mr. Joseph Kesting, the contractor, who had erected the building, stated that it could not be duplicated for less than \$45,000.00. The land was estimated at \$2,000.00 per acre.

In 1905 Mr. Max Zenkel frescoed the church gratis, adding several beautiful murals to the sanctuary.

On December 6, 1910, the Rev. F. A. Houck bought the Sisters' residence from Mr. Noah H. Swayne for \$50.00. It was moved, enlarged, and remodeled at a cost of about \$600.00.

The roof and the gutters of the combination building were painted with asphaltum in the year 1910.

In the summer of 1910, the exterior of the whole building was given two coats of paint by Mr. Herbert Meyers, who, assisted by the janitor, did the work for \$40.00. The paint cost the parish about \$25.00.

The cement sidewalks on Wheeling Street were laid in 1911 by Eugene Mauter for \$75.00, \$50.00 of which was donated by the Rev. Father Houck, and \$25.00 by the Garrigan Brothers.

From 1905 and 1911 the parish consisted of about 125 to 150 families, i.e., about 700 souls.

During the pastorate of Father Houck, from October 1, 1903, to July 18, 1912, 251 individuals were baptized, 46 marriages were celebrated, 26,579 Holy Communions were distributed, and the last rites were administered to 96 members of the parish.



Rev. Paul P. Palka
Pastor

The church indebtedness was reduced from \$46,000.00 to \$37,700.00, and the parish school enrollment, from 1906 to 1911, ranged between 128 and 177 pupils.

On July 19, 1912, the Most Rev. Joseph Schrembs appointed Father Houck administrator of St. Ann's Parish in Toledo. Thereupon the Precious Blood Fathers took over the care of St. Ignatius Parish.

* * *

The first officers of the Holy Rosary Slovak Church were: John Balas, president; Charles Zettner, secretary; Andrew Lengel, recorder; George Kacmarik, a non-Catholic, treasurer. Auditors were: John Masney, Michael Gocik, John Okenka, Andrew Kaduk. Collectors of funds for the new church were: Stephen Palenchar, John Dojcak, Andrew Balas, Stephen Lengel, Michael Lengel, Michael Nagy, Michael Gaydos, Martin Elias, Geza Zettner. These representatives of the parish were elected to their respective offices at a meeting held on June 24, 1906, in a hall located on Front Street, then the property of Mr. Charles Zettner. At the initial meeting of this Mission Parish a motion was made and carried to buy four lots on Paine Avenue, between Genesee and Bakewell Streets, which property was later sold, and is now occupied by a branch of the Toledo Public Library. The Parish members also pledged sums from \$5.00 to \$25.00 for the future building of the Mission. Another meeting of the parishioners was held on July 3 at 7:00 P.M. Four delegates were elected to go to the Bishop of Cleveland to seek permission to acquire property for the future church building. On October 20, another meeting was arranged at which Father Peter Rysanek, who had been sent by the Bishop of Cleveland, addressed the parishioners. He was introduced by Mr. John Balas. According to the minutes of the secretary, the priest was "accepted" as the first pastor of the newly organized parish. He took charge of the congregation at once, and shortly after prepared a complete register of all Slovaks and Moravians in his territory. On October 28, the Reverend Father Rysanek discussed plans for a suitable church building. He was "instructed" to have sketches made of the proposed building which was to be a frame structure. It was also agreed to by all, to pay the Reverend Pastor a regular salary.

Here ends the "history" as recorded by one of the parishioners. For the period extending from November, 1906, to March 15, 1914, no historic data are available.

The first child baptized by Father Peter Rysanek was Elizabeth Masney, (November 11, 1906). The first couple he



Rev. Andrew M. Blasko
Assistant Pastor

united in holy wedlock were John Nalepa and Antonia Stasa (January, 1907). In June, 1907, Father Rysanek resigned and was succeeded by Father Valentine Cichy, pastor of St. Mary Magdalene Church, Rossford, Ohio. He administered the Mission from June, 1907, to January 10, 1913, and was succeeded by the Rev. Francis X. Czelusta, who was pastor until October 15, 1916. ~~The Most Rev. Joseph Schrembs appointed the present pastor~~ ^{REV.} then assistant at St. Stephen Church, Toledo, Ohio, to take charge of the parish.

From the year 1906 to 1912, very few parish activities were recorded. The people themselves administered the affairs of the congregation. Until the new church was built, religious services were held in a hall on 2020 Front Street. The parishioners made frequent appeals to the Most Rev. J. P. Farrelly, then Bishop of Cleveland, for permission to erect a respectable building, but nothing was done until 1912.

At the close of the year 1906, there was a balance of \$600.00, which amount was recorded as the receipts for the year, 1907.

In 1912 the work began on the Paine Avenue Mission Church, the total cost of which was not to exceed \$3,000.00. It was completed at an actual cost of \$3,218.00, and blessed on December 8, 1912. The four lots were bought for the amount of \$1,800.00. Donations from individual members of the parish for the new building amounted to \$858.00. The contract for the building was signed by Mr. John Gadus.

According to Father Cichy, there were about 50 families belonging to the parish in 1912.

In January 1913, he bought the Stations of the Cross for \$160.00.

Shortly after, on January 10, Father Czelusta became pastor. In September, 1913, pews costing \$314.00 were bought and paid for. The amount of \$2,500.00 was paid on the church mortgage, leaving a balance of \$296.75.

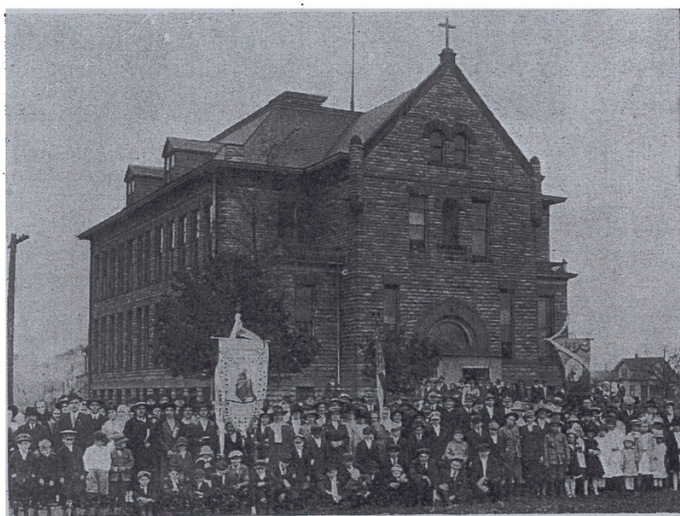
The Rev. Anthony A. Pirnat took charge of the parish on October 15, 1916. The debt was paid off. The balance on September 30, 1917, was \$2,953.27. After this date the history of the Slovak and Moravian people continues at St. Ignatius Church, York and Wheeling Streets.

By a decree of the Most Rev. Bishop Joseph Schrembs, the Slovak and Moravian members of the parish were to join with the members of St. Ignatius Church to form one parish—St. Ignatius Church.

At the annual church meeting scheduled for January 3,



**The First Holy Rosary Church
on Paine Ave.**



The Old St. Ignatius Church



The New Holy Rosary Church

1916, at Kacmarik's Hall on Front Street, the following councilmen were elected: Thomas Okenka, Martin Okenka, George Bocik, and Joseph Gjasik.

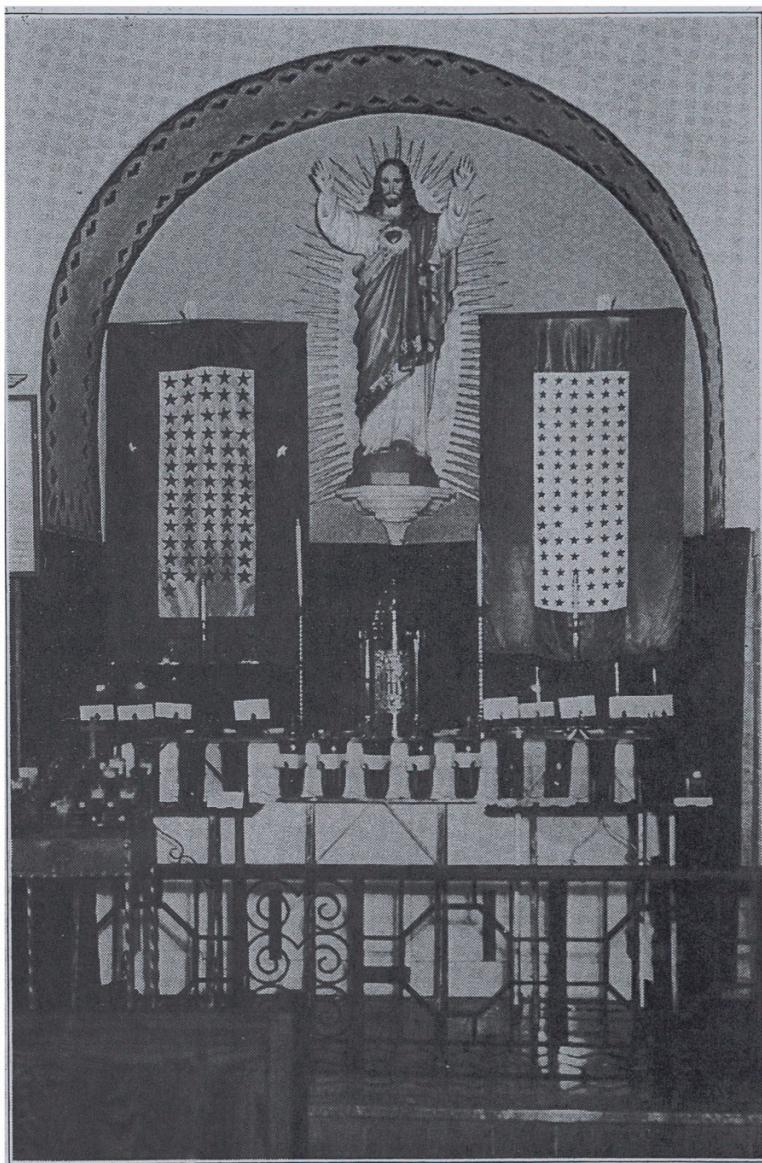
The Slovak people of Rossford had also belonged to the Holy Rosary Mission Church from 1906 until August, 1923, when the SS. Cyril and Methodius Church was established by the Rev. A. A. Pirnat.

On October 15, 1916, the parishioners marched from St. Stephen Church to the Holy Rosary Mission. High Mass was celebrated at 10:00 by the new pastor. The Right Reverend Benedict Rosinski, Dean of the Lucas County Deanery, preached in Polish, while the pastor, who was not familiar with the Slovak language, addressed the congregation in English.

On September 23, 1917, the first meeting was held in St. Ignatius parish hall. After the opening prayer, a letter from the Ordinary, announcing the proposed merging of the Holy Rosary and St. Ignatius parishes, was read to the assembled parishioners. Previous to this, the people of the Holy Rosary Church had repeatedly requested the Ordinary to grant them permission to acquire more property on which to build a new church and convert the old one into a parish hall. The people of St. Ignatius parish had had a heavy indebtedness and many of the members had moved away, thus making it almost impossible for a small group to carry on the work. The Most Reverend Bishop conferred several times with the pastors of the respective churches in regard to the merger. Father Basil Didier, of the Precious Blood Congregation, was in charge of St. Ignatius. Shortly after, on September 23, 1907, a meeting, as mentioned above, was called, and after the reading of the memorandum, the exact state of affairs was explained to the people. Later, on the 29th of September, definite instructions were given to the pastor. At St. Ignatius the total debt (on notes) amounted to \$30,500.00. The annual income for a number of years had totaled about \$6,000.00. The parish buildings, due to the fact that there were no funds available for repairs, were in a very bad condition. Some \$10,000.00 were spent in a few years to save the buildings from at least "elemental" destruction.

On September 30, 1917, Mass was celebrated for the last time in the church on Paine Avenue. The following Sunday, October 7, 1917, the parishioners said farewell to their little church, and Slovaks and Moravians, forming a beautiful procession, marched from Holy Rosary Mission, Paine Avenue, to St. Ignatius Church on York Street, where a High Mass was sung most beautifully.

At a meeting of January 27, 1918, the pastor, urged the



Sacred Heart Altar

people to elect a parish council as prescribed by the Rules of the Diocese of Toledo. These Rules were then read and explained, and the election held accordingly.

After much discussion and deliberation, it was decided that the parish be placed under the patronage of Mary, the Queen of the Most Holy Rosary.

On July 25, 1918, the Bishop of Toledo officially declared that thereafter the Church would be known as Holy Rosary Church; that all obligations and debts were to be assumed by the parish as they existed since 1917, and that the English-speaking parishioners, were to continue to worship at this church. In case, however, that they should decide, at some future date, to build their own church, the Holy Rosary Parish would have to pay them \$18,000.00 at 6%. This document was signed by the pastor, Anthony A. Pirnat, and by the parish councilmen, namely, John Maczko, George Sopko, Bert Bacho, Joseph Cajka, who represented the Slovak and Moravian members. Two councilmen of the former St. Ignatius Church also signed the document, viz. Vincent Heintschel, Sr., and Joseph Bruetsch. Witnesses were the Rev. August J. Schwertner and the Rev. Francis Malone. It was approved by the Most Rev. Joseph Schrembs, August 23, 1918.

In 1920, the interior of the Church was decorated at a cost of about \$600.00. In 1921 gas installed in all the parish buildings and the lavatories completely renovated for the sum of \$1,400.00. About 1,000 truck loads of dirt were brought to fill in the yard. The entire church roof was temporarily repaired for a few years. Liberty bonds and cash collected in 1918 amounted to \$2,800. Special taxes for York Street were \$1,800. A new boiler was bought for the Rectory in 1918, the cost of which, including installation, was \$400.00. The porch of the Sisters' house was repaired, and the house was painted inside and outside at a cost of \$400.00. A garage was built in 1919 for the sum of \$700.00. The exterior of the old Church building was painted and the schoolrooms decorated for \$870.00. A special collection held in 1919 amounted to \$2,025.00.

Other improvements made from 1919 and 1929 were as follows:

Linoleum and carpets (nave and sanctuary)	\$ 400.00
1920—Note paid. Precious Blood Fathers	6,000.00
1920—Moved Hall from Paine Avenue to Wheeling	
—laid a new foundation	1,300.00
1922—Sept. 15, Paine Avenue lots sold for	4,500.00



St. Joseph's Altar

1923—Fire Escape	400.00
Special collection	2,000.00
Portables (2)	500.00
1924—New Boiler (Sisters' Home)	450.00
Hall (Stage added)	200.00
1925—Hall (decorated inside and painted)	275.00
1926—Rectory	12,000.00
Roof on Church	2,200.00
1929—Church painted	900.00
Paid to the Chancery office accumulated diocesan assessment	1,500.00
Payment on parish debt	3,000.00

The parish paid toward Central Catholic High School \$12,000.00 and to the Cathedral \$2,000.00.

The old church was moved from Paine Avenue to the present location on Wheeling Street. The stage was added in 1924. In 1926 the present parish house was built. The former Priests' House was transformed into a local convent for the Sisters of Notre Dame. Father Alfred G. Schindler was appointed assistant pastor in June, 1924, until January, 1925.

Improvements made during the years between 1929 and 1938:

1929—Church painted. Collection	\$ 900.00
Rose Window	300.00
Electric wiring—main building (state requirement)	640.00
1930—New Boiler (Sister's House)	450.00
1931—New Cathedral (assessment)	2,000.00
1933—(Worst year financially) Entire income	6,000.00
1936—Rectory decorated	250.00
1938—Insurance paid (The Combination Building was destroyed by fire)	72,000.00

In 1935, a new wooden floor was laid in the church basement (where the stage used to be) for the benefit of the young people. With the help of some friends from the city, clubrooms were built at a cost of about \$700. In 1937, the pastor proposed a campaign to pay off about \$20,000.00. Since many of the parishioners, however, considered that as impossible, because of the poverty of the people, the plan was dropped. Soon after, the Most Rev. Karl J. Alter issued a letter, dated February 10, 1937, to the effect that if the debt would be paid off, he would release the parish of the obligation to pay the sum of



Grotto of Seven Dolors.

\$18,000.00—the debt to the English-speaking parishioners. (See page 9 of this historical sketch). In May, 1937, Rev. Jos. J. Pastorek celebrated his First Holy Mass.

On September 12, 1937, there was a reception and dinner at 12:00 for Father Pastorek, as new assistant pastor of Holy Rosary Church.

On January 28, 1938, at 1:15 A.M., fire totally destroyed the combination Church-and-School building. Fortunately, we were well protected by insurance, receiving \$72,000.00 indemnity. Articles which were damaged in the fire, e.g., pieces of the chalice and of the Ostensorium, together with a brief history of the parish, were placed in the cornerstone of the new church.

At a meeting held on February 6, the people of the parish decided in favor of building a school with a basement hall as gymnasium, to be used temporarily as a church, on the corner of York and Wheeling. To save expenses, the debris left by the fire was cleared away by some of our parishioners.

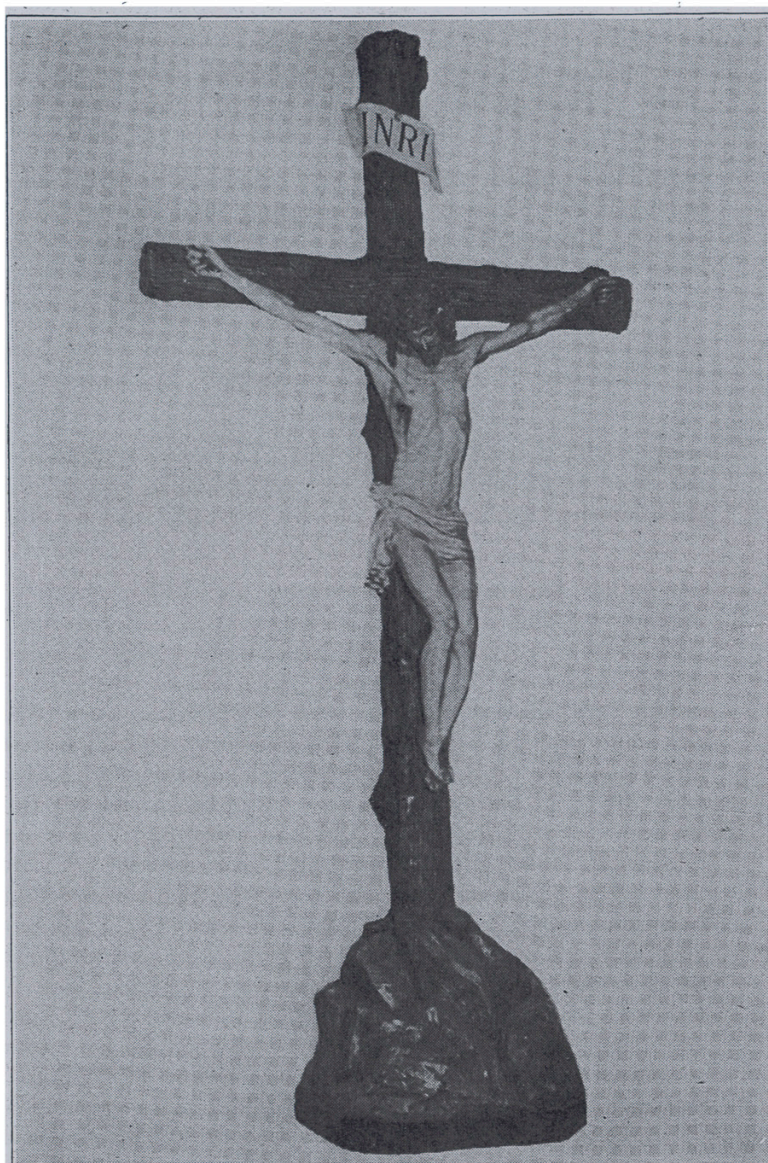
Solicitors for the New Building Fund, and members of the Building Committee were elected (some of whom resigned): George Bocik, John Gadus, John Novak, Frank Bires, Frank Tomes, Sr., Emil Kieffer, Frank Cipriani, Eugene Mauter, Anthony Heintschel, Carmine Testa. The minutes of the meeting were recorded by Father Joseph Pastorek. In July, 1938, Mr. William R. Perry, an architect, presented a plan for the school and gymnasium building—\$125,000.00. This, however, was considered too expensive for our small congregation.

A number of meetings were held. What was resolved at one, was sure to be changed at the next. Finally it was decided not to hold any more general meetings. As usual, many rumors about anything and everything were afloat. Nothing was done, however. In 1939, a detailed report was prepared and submitted to the parish so that everyone concerned could become fully acquainted with the financial status of the congregation.

In 1939, March 10, Father Pastorek was appointed assistant at St. John Church, Lima, Ohio. A party was held in his honor on the 7th of March.

On March 15th, Mr. Perry came from Pittsburgh to present another set of plans. This time it was a combination building. The Bishop examined and approved them. On the following Sunday, the people were given an opportunity to study the plans to which they gave their wholehearted acceptance. In that year we paid off our entire indebtedness.

On April 3, the bids were opened. The general contract was awarded to the Comte Construction Company. The heat-



Large Cross in Church

ing was handled by Clem Less, whereas the electrical contract was given to the Taylor Company.

The Bishop insisted that the whole contract should not exceed the sum of \$70,000.00. The plans were changed accordingly.

Despite a heavy downpour, the Cornerstone laying ceremonies were performed by the Most Rev. Bishop Karl J. Alter, on July 30, 1939, at 4:00 P.M.

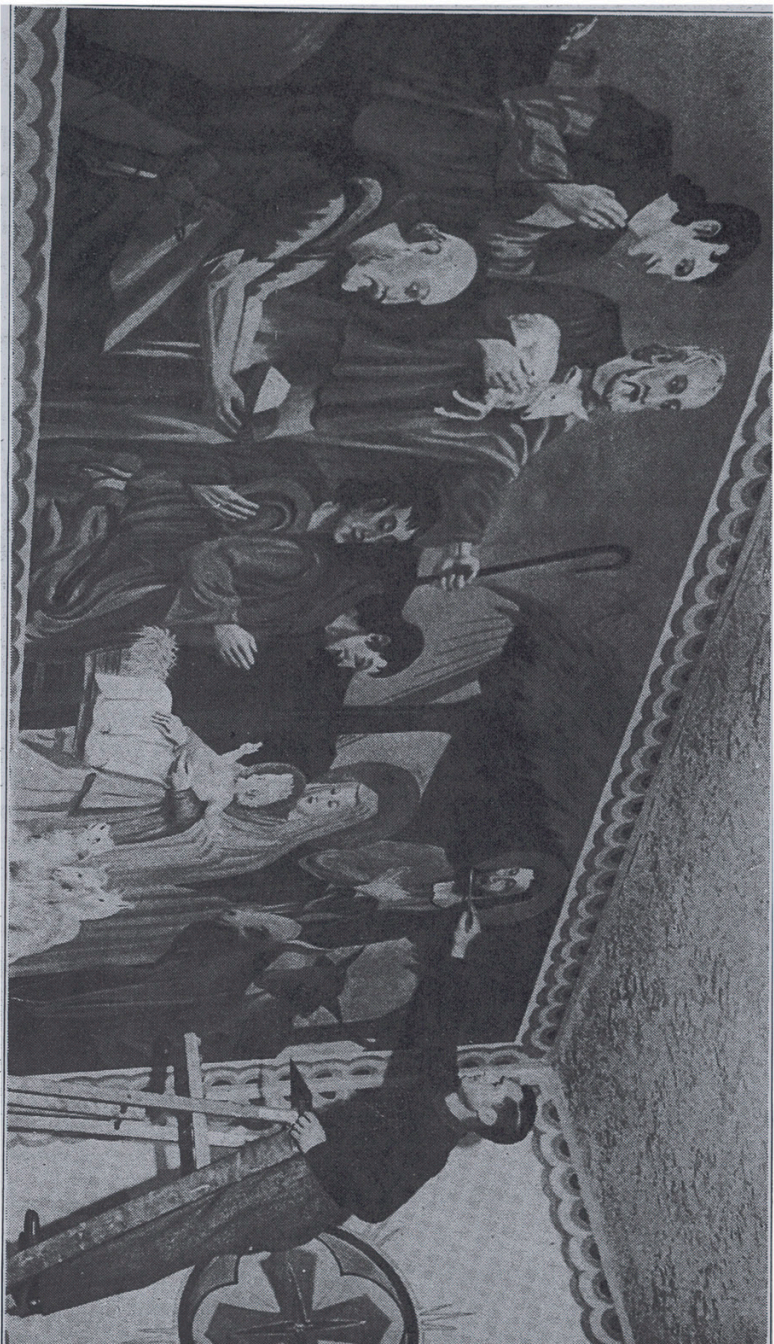
On the 19th of November the Most Rev. Bishop celebrated the first Mass in the new building. From then on, we began to use the new church for all religious services. Prior to that date, i.e., from January 30 on, the hall on Wheeling had been used for services on Sundays.

A collection, for the benefit of our parish, was taken up in all the churches on February 20, 1938. It amounted to \$3,400.00.

On Memorial Day, 1939, the Most Rev. Karl J. Alter, came to preside at the Consecration of the marble altars and the Dedication of the Church. About one hundred priests were present.

In August, 1940, we excavated a large area under the present hall for the installation of a modern heating system. The Young People's Club paid for the furnace (\$542.00). About 200 steel chairs were bought, and new gas ranges (\$200.00) were purchased. New kitchen utensils and dishes to be used at dinners and banquets were also bought, since the old ones had been totally destroyed by the fire. A fan system, to cool off the hall in summer, was also installed in 1940. The restrooms were renovated according to standards of modern sanitation. A request was presented to the Most Reverend Bishop in 1940, for permission to excavate under the entire hall. The plans were presented to two local firms, who submitted estimates amounting to at least \$8,000.00. The matter was fully discussed at a meeting of parishioners who decided that such an expenditure for so small a building was unwarranted. Our aim was to make the hall available for athletic and social purposes. Viewed from these angles and especially since the Ordinary of the Diocese advised us against such an undertaking, the matter in question was dropped.

On June 22nd, 1941, the parish as well as Rev. Pirnat celebrated a Silver Jubilee. The day opened with a Thanksgiving Mass celebrated by the Rev. Pastor. A dinner was held in the parish hall in the afternoon.



Mr. Paul Pely is Painting the Sanctuary

On July 5, 1941, Rev. Andrew Blasko was appointed the assistant of this parish—he is still acting in that capacity.

Our pastor, Rev. Anthony A. Pirnat, who was in his fiftieth year, died at St. Vincent's Hospital on June 28, 1942, after a prolonged illness.

The Most Rev. Bishop Alter had the funeral Mass on Wednesday, July 1. The Rev. A. J. Sawkins preached in English and Rev. Paul P. Palka from Rossford, O., preached in Slovak. His brother Rev. Alois Pirnat from Eveleth, Minn., was also present. We layed our pastor to his eternal rest in Calvary Cemetery. May his soul rest in peace.

As token of gratitude the parish bought him a monument for his grave.

After Rev. Pirnat's death, the Rev. Andrew Blasko was appointed administrator of the parish until the new pastor would take over. On July 24, the Most Rev. Bishop Alter appointed Rev. Paul P. Palka our new pastor.

We welcomed him at a banquet on July 26, 1942. Msgr. Henry E. Boesken extended him a warm reception in the name of the Toledo Deanery.

Our new pastor did not take a rest but got to work at once. With the help of his good parishioners and the parish societies he bought many needed items for the church. By Dec. 31, 1943, we saw many new improvements in the church: holy water fonts, a large crucifix, sanctuary lamp, a statue of our Lady of the Holy Rosary at the main altar, a statue of St. Joseph, a new chalice, a new Bethlehem, a tabernacle at St. Joseph's altar, a statue of the Sacred Heart, the Way of the Cross, a statue of Christ Risen and buried, two angels at the main altar and new vestments.

After providing all necessities for the church, like a good priest, he began to improve the material needs, like a good provider. He paid off a goodly sum on the debt and all the accumulated bills. The rectory was repaired. With the help of the young folks of the parish the yard and walks on the church property were covered with crushed rock, so that now one can walk on them without gathering mud.

During this year he also provided us with a mission given by the Slovak Benedictine Fathers.

We thought that he certainly did enough for the time being and would take a rest. But it seems the first year with us only gave him an appetite for more work. On Feb. 13, 1944,

we blessed the grotto of the Seven Dolors of the Blessed Virgin. The grotto was built by Rev. Kaufman from Genoa, O.

He also installed the Way of the Sorrowful Mother and now we accompany her on her Way of the Cross in our church every Friday.

The Most Rev. Bishop came to confirm on May 7. At this occasion we were proud of our newly decorated sanctuary. The altar and everything around it are beautiful.

In April we held a triduum for the young folks. The Paulist Fathers were in charge.

During the summer the Sister's home was repaired. All the necessary things were bought and installed, so that the Sisters might be more comfortable and have an incentive to continue in their hard work.

With the help of God we are progressing. We're collecting for our mortgage and buying bonds. We pay respect to our soldiers both living and dead; would that the Lord would put an end to this war so that they might soon join their loved ones.

We ask God's help for the future, so that we may improve both spiritually and materially in our parish work. Let His Will be done.

